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Speeches

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

Remarks prepared for delivery by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Richard Lyng before the General Accounting Office (GAO) Community and Economic Development Division, Washington, D.C., May 5, 1981 at 9:00 a.m.

In the passageway that connects USDA's Administration Building with the South Building, there hangs the portrait of a very distinguished Secretary of Agriculture--James Wilson, legislator, educator and scientist.

James Wilson served as Secretary under three Presidents--McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and Taft. His sixteen years as Secretary make him the longest-serving Cabinet Member in American history.

It's certainly fitting that Secretary Wilson's portrait is placed in a passageway connecting the Administration Building to USDA's other buildings. For Wilson never once lost sight of the fact that the fundamental work of the department takes place in its research and educational units. As Secretary, he often visited scientists in their labs. He observed their work, encouraged their efforts, and placed a heavy emphasis on individual creativity. The sixteen years of his administration were devoted to transforming USDA into a research and educational giant working on behalf of the American agricultural community.

Those of us who are now at USDA intend to draw some inspiration from James Wilson:

- It's not that Secretary John Block wants to rival Secretary Wilson's staying power--I suspect he will be satisfied with something less than sixteen years in office!
- It's not that Secretary Block, or I, or any of our assistant secretaries pretend to have the degree of scientific expertise to which James Wilson could lay claim in his day.
- But of one thing I assure you: Secretary Block and our whole team deeply appreciate all the USDA biochemists, geneticists, entomologists, veterinarians, agronomists, economists, statisticians and other specialists who are hard at work trying to ensure the

continued prosperity of American agriculture. We intend to put ourselves at the service of these experts. We are determined to provide an administrative climate in which their efforts will be increasingly productive.

Of course, USDA has no monopoly on expertise. What USDA can do is obviously only one part of what America must do. The role which academia and the private sector are playing, and will continue to play, is of overwhelming significance.

Let's hope that the cooperation and healthy competition among *all* the experts will save us from the kind of myopia to which even the visionary James Wilson was liable. For despite his emphasis on scientific research, and despite his famous statement that "the future holds many important discoveries still to be made," Secretary Wilson displayed very little patience with that new-fangled invention, the automobile. He begrudgingly allowed one to be purchased for USDA's Beltsville farm--but only on the condition that it was not to be a precedent for others.

Now just try to imagine what life would be like without trucks, without tractors, without almost everything we've come to regard as farm machinery. Wayne Rasmussen, our departmental historian, has made some calculations: To achieve 1976's farm production using 1916 methods, we'd need a mere *61 million horses and mules and some 31 million farm workers*.

All of us relish the opportunity provided by today's GAO-sponsored symposium. Today's symposium, like USDA's annual Agricultural Outlook Conference, provides a forum in which we can step back for awhile and rethink our premises--a forum in which we can consider the directions which American agricultural policy should take as we move into the eighties. And I hope that, as representatives of government, academia, and the private sector, we will leave today's meeting with a clearer sense of our respective roles in the years ahead.

Some things seem to me axiomatic about the eighties. World demand for agricultural products will continue to grow significantly. The U.S. role in meeting that demand will become even more pivotal. And the sooner trade barriers are relaxed, the sooner will the U.S. be able to put its great comparative advantage in agriculture at the service of the world.

The Reagan Administration will combat inflation. Accordingly, we're bullish on America. And it's our position that, if other governments also fight inflation, the world economic outlook during the eighties will be brighter than many have predicted.

Even those who are pessimistic about world economic growth forecast near-record annual rates of growth of 2.5 to 2.7 percent in world demand for agricultural products. The increases in the volume of agricultural products demanded would be 25 to 50 percent larger than the increases of the seventies. Population growth might slow down in the eighties. However, increases in per capita caloric requirements associated with improved diets and changing age composition will actually have a positive impact on the rate of growth in demand. Even a low 1.79 world population growth rate implies an annual increase in the number of people to be fed to over 83 million by 1985--an annual increase equal in size to the population of Bangladesh. This 83 million figure compares with a 75 million annual increase in the mid-seventies.

Thus, even on quite conservative estimates about economic and population growth, the world demand for agricultural products will increase greatly during the eighties. Personally, I think the actual demand during the eighties will be higher than these conservative estimates. The countries of southern Europe--Greece, Spain, and Portugal--will want to improve their diets. The centrally planned economies are also committed to improving diets and will be in the market for feedgrains and oilseeds. The middle-income countries of North Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia will likely decide to expand their food imports by wider margins. And even very small per capita increases in consumption in China and South Asia--whose combined populations represent about 51 percent of the world's population--will translate into enormous increases in demand.

This ever-growing world demand for agricultural products means that trends which have made the U.S. the world's predominant agricultural exporter will *accelerate* during the eighties.

Many areas of the world are not producing, and simply cannot produce, as much as they are consuming or would like to consume:

- During the seventies, the foreign production/consumption gap for wheat and coarse grains increased at a pace of seven million tons a year.

- During the seventies the U.S. accounted for 51 percent of the increases in world wheat exports and for about 89 percent of the increase in coarse grain exports. We're now at a point where we supply a full 43 percent of the world wheat exports, about 71 percent of the coarse grain exports, and 84 percent of the soybean exports.

These are the trends that will accelerate. Even though I'm sure of that, I wouldn't predict the exact figures or percentages. I only point out that some USDA analysts argue that, despite any foreign increases in productivity, by 1985 the world outside the U.S. will depend on us for 15 percent of its agricultural products--compared with 2 percent in the early fifties and 11 percent in the late seventies.

Inevitably, then, as supplies tighten, the world will call upon America's comparative advantage in agriculture to prove itself. The Administration has signalled that the age of persistent, large U.S. surpluses is over. And while target prices and deficiency payments to farmers may have been appropriate to times of considerable surplus, it's our belief that without such payments, market forces will suffice to spur American farmers to greater, remunerative productivity.

This brings me to a related point. It's been forecast that, by the end of the decade, America will have considerable leverage over the prices of agricultural products. Certainly, America wants to profit from its agriculture--the huge deficit in our nonagricultural trade leaves us no other choice. Yet it will be better for all concerned--for foreign nations as well as for ourselves--if trade barriers to American exports are reduced *now*. In this way American farmers will not have to cope with large variability in demand during the early eighties. In this way American farmers will have incentive to pace-up the investment that will put the productive potential of our U.S. soil at the service of the whole globe. In this way the real price of food for the world community will be kept as low as possible.

In order to ensure the needed increases in productivity, and to guarantee the continued profitability of American agriculture, Secretary Block has placed a new, heightened emphasis on agricultural research. We've requested an increase in USDA's research budget.

At USDA we will cooperate with the states and regions in research that benefits *all* farmers. We intend to increase yields, spur soil

conservation, and make the wisest use of our water supplies. We want to improve the condition of our livestock. We will continue to provide farmers with essential information on the use and effects of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. We are developing technology that will maintain the quality, and increase the volume, of our exports. And we will make every attempt to gain greater access for American agricultural scientists to foreign research specimens and sources.

As science advances, the distinction between agriculturally-related and nonagricultural research is harder to draw. Innovations in the pharmaceutical, chemical, or energy industries will have an enormous impact on American farmers and processors. Mr. Katsuhiro Utada, recently named president of the Japanese firm Ajinomoto, has predicted that the concept of food will gradually change--that the boundaries which distinguish food from medicine will begin to yield. Ajinomoto has already used its amino acid technology to produce and market a product in this vein.

At USDA we intend to keep abreast of the research currents and developments--of the "emerging trends"--in the private sector and academia. American agriculture must be well-positioned to cope with whatever innovations science may bring.

The increasing demand for our exports will involve new strains on the transportation system. Roads, bridges, interior waterways, railroads, terminals, docks, and harbors will all need attention if we are to be able to keep up with the demand for our farm products. The present Administration is well-aware that transportation needs for the late eighties and into the nineties must be anticipated in advance.

To state it simply, our national needs will require that we move aggressively both to open up new markets and to reduce domestic and foreign barriers to our agricultural exports.

The private sector has expended great energy opening up markets abroad. Creating demand requires much patience and persistence--it can take years just to familiarize people in the LDC's with the techniques of storage, handling, baking, packaging, and so forth. This Administration will try to provide our agricultural attaches and counselor with the tools to continue to support such private sector initiatives.

Over the years, P.L. 480 efforts, by acquainting foreign people with our commodities, have helped create markets for our agricultural products. In giving P.L. 480 assistance, the U.S. has observed the principle that such assistance shouldn't encroach on the traditional export markets of other nations.

As we look out to the eighties, the view at USDA remains the quite old-fashioned view that nations, like people, should labor at those things they do best. America wants to put its comparative advantage in agriculture at the service of mankind; and we will respect the right of other nations to trade freely those products in which they have a comparative advantage. The sooner barriers to our agricultural exports are removed, the less expensive will be the real price of food at the end of the decade and during the nineties. There's hardly any better service we can do for the LDC's than holding down the real price of the food imports they are bound to require.

So here's an outline of some of the important factors we must keep firmly in mind as we develop and implement U.S. food policies. The government role is a major one, but must not be allowed to dominate or excessively regulate. Our role should be to stimulate. The agriculture potential is tremendous today, just as it was when Agriculture Secretary James Wilson, in 1913, said "the future holds many important discoveries still to be made."

One can easily wonder if the pace of change during the next sixty-eight years will be as fast as in the years since he made that statement. I suspect we can no more guess accurately at what lies ahead than could Wilson, but that the discoveries ahead will be even more revolutionary.

Thank you.

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Remarks prepared for delivery by Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block at the New Jersey Agricultural Society, Mercerville, New Jersey, May 6, 1981

It's difficult for me to put together the right words needed to congratulate your society on this great anniversary. What more can a person say about an organization that has successfully spanned the years of our nation's agricultural history--especially when one considers

the changes that have occurred within the industry. Your 200-year history speaks well for itself.

I particularly want to compliment you for the work your organization is doing in the area of consumer information. It's very important that we continue to let the non-farm public know that agriculture does not exist within a vacuum--that what happens in agriculture directly effects their daily lives.

It is equally important that we in agriculture do not create vacuums within our own industry. For example, you live in the Garden State. You have a right to be proud of your production of fruits and vegetables. On the other hand, we raise a lot of corn and soybeans back in Illinois, and we're proud of those crops. But regardless of what crops we produce, we can't afford to sit back and think we are not affected by what happens to the farmer across the country who raises something entirely different.

Agriculture today cannot afford to live within such a vacuum. We have to realize that we share many concerns, regardless of the commodities we produce individually. And we have to realize that unless we work toward making all segments of agriculture strong--we are all going to be weakened.

Just look at agricultural exports, for example. The vital role these exports play within the agricultural community, the national economy and the world at large cannot be overlooked. We all prosper in one way or another.

More than one million people work in export-related jobs. Farm exports absorb the production of one out of three acres. This amounts to more than 100 million farmland acres. And about one out of every three and a half dollars of total farm income come from our farm exports. We're got a good thing going for agriculture, and it's going to get better.

I'm not saying that new markets are going to come easy. The recent Soviet grain embargo has encouraged other countries to increase their production. This has created greater competition for our grain in the world markets. Our job now is to restore our competitive position in the world. We have to rebuild our reputation as the world's most dependable supplier.

In keeping with this goal, I have announced just today an intensified campaign to expand grain exports to five target countries where we think a growing market potential exists. This campaign will involve several high-level consultations with officials of Algeria, Brazil, Chile, China and Morocco. We hope to develop out of these talks a plan for improving credit programs, expanding trade servicing and determining quantities of U.S. grain that each country expects to purchase during the 1981-82 marketing year.

I also plan to extend personal invitations to the officials of these countries to come to Washington where we can continue our talks.

At the same time that we are working to expand our export markets, we are also working toward creating a climate at home that will allow our farmers to profitably produce for these new markets. And I believe we have a farm bill designed to do just that--if it is allowed to work.

This is another example of how we can't afford to create vacuums within our own industry. I'm not saying we have a farm bill that will satisfy everyone. I don't think I've ever seen a farm bill that I liked one hundred percent. But if we start slicing away at this bill to accommodate each of our special interests, the result will be a totally ineffective piece of legislation. And we won't get anything done.

Our farm bill has three basic objectives. They're simple objectives. First, we want to reduce the role of government in agriculture. We *have* to reduce it. It's been oppressive--counter-productive.

Secondly, we want to increase our growth in productivity as we look to the future demands that will be placed on this agricultural plant. We need to provide more funding for research. We need to encourage private industry to do more. That's the only way to keep the productivity up. It won't happen automatically.

Our final objective is to provide a farm program with minimal cost to the government. And that goes without saying. There's no other way to get control of the spiraling cost of government.

As I said earlier--you can't put this agricultural industry into a vacuum. You cannot think about the farm bill without thinking about the President's total economic package. Farm legislation is an important part of that package which is designed to hold down government spending.

Just look at the runaway government spending we've had. The federal budget has been balanced only once in the past 20 years. Federal spending per average household has increased 46 percent over just the last four years. The federal debt has grown from some \$400 billion in 1971 to nearly \$1 trillion today. That's frightening!

The old philosophy that the government could buy our way into prosperity has failed. We have not prospered. In 1960 America produced nearly half of the cars in the world. Today it produces barely a fifth. After World War II, we produced about half the world's steel. Today we produce only a sixth. Productivity has actually declined in the U.S. for the past two years.

We mean business when we say something has to be done. Right now the President's program is our only alternative. I think it's a good plan. It's good because it's designed to restore our freedom to excel and to create. It is designed with the philosophy that we can manage our own destiny far better than the government can.

I know it can work, because that's the way we built our nation's agriculture. And that's the way we're going to bring this nation back to life.

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Testimony

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD E. LYNNG, DEPUTY
SECRETARY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS, FAMILY
FARMS, AND ENERGY, COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CONCERNING THE TIMBER SALE PROGRAM ON THE
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST AND RECENT FEDERAL
COURT FINDINGS PERTAINING TO: REID BROTHERS
LOGGING COMPANY VS. KETCHIKAN PULP COMPANY AND
ALASKA LUMBER AND PULP COMPANY MAY 6, 1981**

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee to discuss the timber sale program on the Tongass National Forest in Alaska and a lawsuit now before the courts involving the Reid Brothers Logging Company, as plaintiff, and the Ketchikan Pulp Company and the Alaska Lumber and Pulp Company, as defendants. I would like to begin with a short statement outlining the history of the situation.

Shortly after World War I the Forest Service began efforts to attract the pulp industry to southeast Alaska in order to provide a stable base for the area's economy and to utilize the abundant timber resource. As part of this effort, the Tongass National Forest was divided into eight timber allotments and the first long-term sale was made in 1920. This sale resulted in a pulp mill which operated for about 2 years before closing. Two 50-year pulp sales were made in 1927, but both sales were terminated in 1933 and no mills were established. Little activity took place in the region until the 1950's and 1960's when six 50-year timber sales were prepared. Final awards were not made for two of these sales, another was cancelled, and a fourth was shortened by 25 years. Two sales, a 1951 sale of 8.25 billion board feet to the Ketchikan Pulp and Paper Company, and a 1956 sale of 5.25 billion board feet to the Alaska Lumber and Pulp Company, resulted in the establishment of pulp mills. The annual timber harvest on the Tongass National Forest has averaged about 490 million board feet over the last 10 years. About one-half of this volume has come from the two long-term sales.

The Forest Service has been concerned for many years with the possibility of the pulp mills' dominance of the independent timber market in southeast Alaska. In order to protect the opportunity for smaller firms to buy National Forest timber, a small business timber sale program has been in operation in Alaska since 1966. In 1968 the Forest Service contacted the Department of Justice concerning possible antitrust implications of Wrangell Lumber Company's acquisition of the Alaska Wood Products Company. Wrangell Lumber Company is associated with Alaska Lumber and Pulp Company.

In 1975, Reid Brothers Logging Company filed a civil suit against Ketchikan Pulp Company, now Louisiana Pacific-Ketchikan, and Alaska Lumber and Pulp Company charging that officials at the two mills conspired to control the timber market in the region and drive independent loggers, such as Reid Brothers, out of business.

In October 1976, the Forest Service requested that the Justice Department investigate the two pulp companies for possible illegal restraint of trade. In December of that year, the Department of Justice's antitrust division notified USDA that they had conducted an extensive investigation and closed the case because of insufficient evidence. At the Forest Service's request, USDA's Offices of Audit and the Inspector General reviewed the Tongass timber appraisal system in 1977 and 1978. In 1978, the Alaska Region requested that recent evidence concerning Tongass National Forest timber sale bidding patterns be transmitted to the Office of the Inspector General for investigation. This material was transmitted to the department of Justice in 1979.

On March 5, 1981, Federal Judge Barbara Rothstein, United States District Court, Western District of Washington in Seattle orally ruled that the actions of these two pulp companies caused about \$500,000 in damage to Reid Brothers. In accordance with antitrust laws, the final amount of damages would be automatically tripled. We have just recently received copies of the transcript of the oral decision and preliminary statements of finding. The final written ruling is expected later this month.

On April 1 of this year, the Regional Forester suspended new timber sale offerings on the Tongass National Forest until July 1, 1981, in order that the Forest Service may analyze the evidence presented in

the Reid Brothers' case and review related material. The special team established for this purpose by the Regional Forester is currently examining the transcript and exhibits from the trial.

The Regional Forester has also requested the Small Business Administration to make new size determinations on firms which bid on small business set-aside sales on the Tongass National Forest. In addition, the Forest Service will determine if any provisions of existing Forest Service timber sale contracts have been breached and if any other acts taken by timber sale purchasers would warrant changes in the Forest Service timber sale program and practices in Alaska. Also, the State of Alaska Attorney General has been notified of the situation in case any Alaska laws have been violated. Pursuant to section 14(e)(3) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976, the Forest Service requested that the Office of the General Counsel notify the Department of Justice concerning the District Court's oral ruling in the Reid Brothers case. A preliminary report was sent on April 22, 1981.

This concludes our prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to your questions.

#

News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

FUND SHORTAGE FORCES 20 PERCENT CUT IN BRUCELLOSIS INDEMNITIES

WASHINGTON, May 1--A shortage of brucellosis eradication funds has forced U.S. Department of Agriculture officials to order a 20 percent across-the-board cut in indemnities paid for brucellosis affected cattle, effective May 1.

Paul Becton, director of the national brucellosis eradication program for USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said the cut was necessary to make sure indemnity funds were available through the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

"If we had continued to pay brucellosis indemnities at existing rates, there would have been no funds to compensate owners of brucellosis reactor cattle during the last three months of the current fiscal year," Becton said.

"Program standards under the cooperative state-federal brucellosis eradication program require cattle to be slaughtered if they react positively to brucellosis tests," Becton said.

Indemnities for registered cattle are based on a percentage of each animal's appraised value, less the salvage paid when the animal is sent to slaughter. This percentage is 88.5 percent, but the calculated indemnity is now reduced by 20 percent.

"Non-registered dairy cattle indemnities are fixed at a flat rate within each state, based on current market values. These flat rates will be reduced by 20 percent," Becton said. Other non-registered cattle have been indemnified at the rate of \$62 per head, but under the spending cut, the rate is reduced to \$50 per head.

Brucellosis in cattle, also called Bang's disease or contagious abortion, is an easily spread bacterial infection of domestic animals, especially cattle and swine. It can be transmitted to humans, where it is known as undulant fever. However, it is not a hazard to people who eat meat and pasteurized dairy products.

Currently, 31 entire states have been classified as certified brucellosis-free under the eradication program. Except for six counties in Florida and Louisiana and the Yellowstone National Park, all

remaining counties in the country are either certified free or in modified-certified status, which indicates that they are progressing toward eradication.

#

HIGH EROSION RATES THREATEN SOIL PRODUCTIVITY, SAYS USDA OFFICIAL

WASHINGTON, May 4--Each year, more than 6.4 billion tons (5.8 billion metric tons) of soil erode from the nation's farmland and other nonfederal lands, a U.S Department of Agriculture official said today.

"In many areas, the rate of erosion seriously threatens long-term agricultural productivity," said Norman A. Berg, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service. "We have unacceptable erosion rates on more than 140 million acres (57 million hectares) of cropland."

Berg said erosion rates exceed acceptable levels on more than 295 million acres (119 million hectares) of cropland, pastureland, forest land, and rangeland. Scientists consider erosion tolerable when eroded topsoil can be replenished through natural processes.

"Of the more than 6.4 billion tons of soil losses from wind and water erosion each year, more than 5 billion tons (4.5 billion metric tons) erode from agricultural land," Berg said. Some 1.1 billion more tons (1 billion metric tons) erode from streambanks, gullies, construction sites, roads and roadsides.

"Sediment, the greatest single water pollutant by volume, is an end product of soil erosion," Berg added.

#

CHERRY GROWERS, PROCESSORS VOTE TO CONTINUE MARKETING ORDER

WASHINGTON, May 6--Red tart cherry growers and processors in eight states have voted to continue the federal marketing order which covers the handling of their crop.

States covered by the marketing order are Ohio, Michigan, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland.

In a U.S. Department of Agriculture referendum March 22-31, slightly more than 72 percent of the producers voting wanted the order continued, according to Charles Brader, fruit and vegetable marketing official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

"Producers favoring the order account for about 75 percent of the cherry production represented in the referendum," Brader said.

"About 60 percent of the cherry processors who voted, accounting for more than 78 percent of the 1980 processed cherries represented in the referendum, also favored a continued marketing order," he said.

Put into effect in 1971, the marketing order requires a referendum every five years to see if producters and processors want it to remain in effect. Brader said USDA would have considered ending the order if the referendum had showed that a majority of the growers voting--either by number or volume of production represented--favored ending the order.

He said USDA also would have considered ending the program if a majority of the processors who processed more than half the volume of cherries represented in the referendum had voted to have it ended.

The marketing order has authority to put cherries in a reserve pool during years of excess production. These cherries, held in frozen storage, are returned to marketing channels during low production years. Brader said this is intended to stabilize supplies and prevent market shortages and gluts.

#

FITZPATRICK TO HEAD USDA TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, May 6--Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today named Martin F. Fitzpatrick as director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Transportation.

Fitzpatrick had been legislative director for Sen. Roger Jepsen (R-Iowa) since 1979.

USDA's Office of Transportation coordinates the activities of researchers, economists, engineers, rural development and export marketing specialists and traffic managers.

each other and with the affected public to achieve their mutual goals," Fitzpatrick said. "This agency, which I view as the voice of rural and agricultural transportation in the federal government, will do just that."

Fitzpatrick joined Jepsen's staff in January 1979, as legislative director and assistant for agricultural committee work. He organized transportation hearings in Iowa, and helped establish the Iowa-Houston Grain Transportation Committee to facilitate transportation of grain to export ports.

From 1977 to 1979, Fitzpatrick was organizational director for the Republican Party of Virginia, and before that he was on the staff of Rep. George O'Brien (R-Ill.), focusing on agricultural matters.

Fitzpatrick was born in Joliet, Ill., in 1952, and attended Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, where he majored in public policy management. He was selected for inclusion in "Who's Who in American Universities," and was active in student government and fraternity affairs.

Fitzpatrick lives in Alexandria, Va.

#

BLOCK LAUNCHES EXPORT EXPANSION DRIVE

WASHINGTON, May 6--Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block today announced an intensified campaign to expand grain exports to five target countries believed to represent a growing market potential.

The five countries, which already take 12 million tons of U.S. wheat and feed grains annually, are Algeria, Brazil, Chile, China and Morocco. Block said the new program will be extended to other markets when plans are developed.

The first step will be several high-level consultations with officials of the target countries, Block said. Names of team members and a schedule of meeting places and dates will be available within a few days.

Expanding export initiatives will help counter the competitive threat generated by the recent embargo on U.S. agricultural exports, he said. "Other countries have increased production, causing greater competition

for U.S. grain in world markets," he said. "We are seeking to restore our competitive position and enhance our reputation as the world's most dependable supplier."

Block said the visits should result in specific plans for expanding trade servicing, improving credit programs, and determining quantities of U.S. grain to be purchased in the 1981-82 marketing year.

The expected large supplies of U.S. grains this year "make it essential we explore every promising avenue for expanded exports," Block said. "Only by exporting to the maximum can we raise the level of farm income."

He said stepped-up high level contacts with foreign countries also would involve personal invitations to ministers and other officials to meet personally with Block and his staff in Washington.

#

ALAN T. TRACY NAMED GENERAL SALES MANAGER, DEPUTY FAS ADMINISTRATOR

WASHINGTON, May 6--Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block has appointed Alan T. Tracy as general sales manager and associate administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service.

In his new position, Tracy will be responsible for administering USDA's foreign market development, export credit and assistance programs. These include cooperator marketing programs, the Public Law 480 (Food for Peace) program and the Commodity Credit Corporation export credit sales program.

U.S. agricultural exports in fiscal 1980 totaled \$40.5 billion. Tracy, 34, had been president of Tracy and Son Farms, Inc.--a family farm and seed business--in Janesville, Wis., since 1976.

A native of Janesville, Wis., Tracy received his bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. He received his master's degree in international business from the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

#

EVERETT RANK NAMED AS ASCS ADMINISTRATOR

WASHINGTON, May 7--Secretary of Agriculture John Block has named Everett Rank as administrator of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and executive vice president of the Commodity Credit Corporation. Rank has served as administrator-designate since March 9.

Rank, a native of Fresno, Calif., farmed cotton, almonds and grain. Following 10 years of service as chairman of the Fresno County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation committee, Rank was appointed chairman of the California State ASC committee in 1969. He held that post until named ASCS Western Regional Director in 1974.

He has been a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation for 34 years and has also served on the board of directors of the Ranchers Cotton Oil Company, Cal Cot and the Clovis Sanger Gin. He was on the board of governors of the Agriculture Foundation at California State University at Fresno.

In his new position, Rank will administer policies and programs of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service through its 50 state and 2700 county offices. Programs under that agency include those for farm commodities, cost-sharing and environmental protection, natural disaster emergencies, national defense relating to farm production, conservation, income stabilization and the handling, storage and distribution of grains and foods.

Rank and his family live in Alexandria, Va.

#

BARLEY IN FARMER-OWNED GRAIN RESERVE TAKEN OUT OF RELEASE STATUS

WASHINGTON, May 7--Barley in the farmer-owned grain reserve may not be removed without penalty because barley prices recently have been below the reserve "release price", Everett Rank, executive vice president of the Commodity Credit Corporation, said today.

The national average adjusted price of \$2.32 for May 1 is 12 cents below the release level for barley in the grain reserve which had been in release status since last October. The \$2.44 price level at which barley is released from the reserve is based on 125 percent of the \$1.95-per-bushel national loan rate for barley. The barley loan rate was increased from \$1.83 to \$1.95 per bushel effective May 1.

Storage payments for reserve barley will be earned in all states beginning May 1, Rank said.

Data used by CCC in determining the release level include five-day average prices reported by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service which show prices bid by buyers at selected markets.

Minneapolis is the daily market reviewed by CCC for barley. The five-day average of these market prices, adjusted to reflect prices received by farmers, was the basis for today's action, Rank said.

As of April 29 there were 12.3 million bushels (268,000 metric tons) of barley in the farmer-owned grain reserve.

#

USDA AND MARYLAND OFFICIALS SURVEY STATE FOR NEW FOREIGN CORN PEST

WASHINGTON, May 7--Agricultural officials from the Maryland and U.S. Departments of Agriculture are conducting a statewide survey to determine the extent of the corn cyst nematode, a newly discovered foreign pest of corn in Maryland.

The officials also will determine what measures are needed to suppress and control the pest, said Harvey Ford, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. An emergency quarantine is not necessary now, Ford said.

The pest, a minute worm, was first found in Pakistan and first described in scientific literature in 1970, Ford said. It's Latin name is "Heterodera zeae."

Ford said he approved the survey as one of several measures to deal with the new pest after it was discovered in four Kent County, Md., corn fields in February.

Ford said the corn cyst nematode is primarily a pest of maize, although it also attacks wheat, oats, barley and sorghum. The nematode infests the soil and the host plant, reducing yields. "During the adult phase of its cycle, it forms cysts in the soil. These cysts can be spread from one area to another when soil clings to harvested plants, plant parts, equipment, containers or vehicles, Ford said.

Although the potential for further spread of the pest isn't known, state authorities have asked voluntary cooperation of affected landowners, Ford said.

The Maryland infestation was identified by A. Morgan Golden, a research nematologist at USDA's Beltsville, Md., Agricultural Research Center. Soil samples were collected by Lorin Krusberg, University of Maryland, and Michael Goff of the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

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USDA MOVES TO DENY MARRIOTT CORP. GARBAGE HANDLING APPROVAL IN CALIFORNIA

WASHINGTON, May 7--U.S. Department of Agriculture officials have moved to withdraw approval for handling and disposing of foreign-origin garbage from Marriott Corporation's World Way West catering facility at Los Angeles International Airport, Los Angeles, Calif.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service deputy administrator Harvey L. Ford said he notified the corporation of his agency's intent to withdraw approval because Marriott has been in repeated violation of federal regulations requiring biologically safe disposal of food and food wastes from international flights.

"We are very concerned about food-borne foreign plant and animal insects and diseases," Ford said.

"Destructive agricultural diseases and pests might easily get into this country through food service wastes on these flights, even though the food is quite safe for human consumption," Ford said "Effective disposal requirements are our principal means of protection."

Ford said the USDA rules require wastes of foreign origin to be sterile and disposed in a landfill or incinerated.

"In March and May of 1980, Marriott employees committed apparent violations of our regulations, which involved putting foreign-origin garbage directly in trash compactors destined for a landfill, without necessary sterilization procedures," Ford said. "Another violation in December of 1980 involved improper disposal of airline meals."

"Without the required treatment, agricultural pests and disease organisms could remain alive in the garbage and subsequently might be spread by birds, dogs or wildlife that scavenge landfills and other disposal sites."

After the first two violations, Marriott officials acknowledged that further violations could result in USDA withdrawing approval for the company to service incoming foreign flights.

"It's difficult to get an urban population to understand the threat foreign agricultural pests and diseases pose," Ford said. "For example, the Dominican Republic has systematically destroyed and is replacing that nation's entire swine population because African swine fever, one of the world's most devastating swine diseases, was introduced from some outside source."

Improper disposal of food wastes from ships or planes caused the recent spread of African swine fever to western hemisphere nations--Brazil, Cuba, Dominican Republic and Haiti, Ford said.

"In addition to African swine fever, we are constantly concerned about many other pests and diseases that can easily be carried in food, foreign souvenirs, cargoes and other materials," Ford said.

USDA officials administer agricultural import regulations to prevent the entry of products containing such pests or diseases. USDA inspectors are stationed at about 80 ports of entry.

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EGG PRODUCER GROUPS MUST BE CERTIFIED BY JUNE 1, USDA SAYS

WASHINGTON, May 7--All egg producer groups wanting to nominate members to the American Egg Board must request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture certify or recertify them by June 1, a USDA official said today.

Thomas H. Porter, an official with USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said producer groups that were certified before June 1 of last year should apply to be certified again so they will be eligible to nominate members and alternates.

The 18-member egg board administers an egg research and promotion program, authorized by the Egg Research and Consumer Information Act. Two-year terms for nine current board members and their alternates will expire at the end of 1981.

Organizations previously certified will receive additional information by mail from USDA. Organizations that have never been certified should request an application and information on eligibility from David Spalding, Agricultural Marketing Service, rm. 2610-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 447-2068.

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USDA ADVISES CONSUMERS TO MICROWAVE PORK TO UNIFORM 170 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT

WASHINGTON, May 8--Consumers and food processors should microwave pork to a temperature of 170 degrees Fahrenheit (77 degrees Celsius) throughout to destroy any microorganisms that might be present, a U.S. Department of Agriculture official said today.

"Preliminary unpublished studies indicate that under certain circumstances trichinae and food poisoning bacteria may not be destroyed by microwave cooking," said Donald L. Houston, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service. The studies showed that live trichinae could be present in some cases in fresh pork cuts which were cooked in several ways, he said.

"USDA is repeating the studies to verify the results," Houston said.

Cooking instructions in some cookbooks may not guarantee sufficiently high temperatures to kill all microorganisms, Houston said.

USDA has notified the microwave oven industry of potential problems if cooking instructions do not ensure that the pork product reaches 170 degrees F. uniformly.

However, Houston said, there have been no reported cases of any illness resulting from pork cooked in a microwave. "We are taking these precautions to alert the public to potential hazards," he said.

"Consumers who follow prudent cooking procedures face no health hazard."

Trichinosis is a minor problem today, Houston said, with only about 100 to 120 clinical cases reported each year. In addition, there is a very low incidence of trichinosis in animals--only .125 percent of the some 80 million hogs slaughtered each year are infected, he said.

Consumers and the food service industry can avoid any problems if they make sure that every part of pork roast or chop reaches at least 170 degrees F., Houston said.

He advised those who prepare pork in microwave ovens--at home or in food institutions--to first check the manufacturer's directions for appropriate cooking times. Also, he said, microwave cooks should:

- Rotate dishes during cooking.

- Let the pork sit for several minutes after cooking, as recommended by manufacturers, to assure more uniform temperature distribution. Cooks can increase the effectiveness of this "equalization" or "dwell" time by wrapping the pork in aluminum foil after cooking.

- After the pork sits, check various places with a meat thermometer. If any part of the pork chop or roast has not reached at least 170 degrees F., cook the meat more thoroughly.

The potential problem is unique to microwave cooking, Houston said, because of the uneven heat radiation that can result if extra care isn't taken.

Microwave ovens cook by exciting the water molecules in the food. The variations in the distribution of water in the pork, the uneven energy distribution in microwave ovens and the potential energy blockage by bone may result in uneven cooking. If the entire piece of meat doesn't reach a temperature of at least 170 degrees F., trichinae may not be killed, Houston said.

